

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO YOUNG STAFF MEMBERS AND INTERNS FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, one of the major reasons why I believe the future of our country is bright and its best days lie ahead is the extraordinary quality, talent, commitment, and energy of the young people who will in time assume the responsibility of leadership.

Members of Congress know well, perhaps better than most, how blessed our nation is to have in reserve such exceptional young men and women who will go on to become leaders in their local communities, states, and the nation in the areas of business, education, government, philanthropy, the arts and culture, and the military.

We know this because we see them and benefit from their contributions every day. Many of them work for us in our offices as junior staff members, congressional fellows, or interns and they do amazing work for and on behalf of the constituents we are privileged to represent.

I rise today to pay tribute to the wonderful young men and women who have done this work in my office for my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is no higher calling than the call to serve a cause larger than ourselves. That is why I ran for public office. I was inspired to serve by President Kennedy who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," and by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said:

Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. . . . You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.

By this measure, there are several other great young men and women who served as volunteers this year in my offices. They may toil in obscurity but their contributions to the constituents we serve are deeply appreciated and I wish to acknowledge them. They are: Carlos Fierros, Toulia Nwabunnia, Ziad Saqr, Michal Shinnar, Chike Achebe, Morgan Cassell, Deontae Wherry, Kern Kumar, Myron Latney, Mohammad Cifci, Hiromi Oka, Marcus Smith, Zahit Akinci, Alezeh Rauf, Elif Duran, Omorose Eguakun, Amy Akabue, Ariadna Mujica, Olivia Igboke, and Ayanna Costley.

Mr. Speaker, the energy, intelligence, and idealism young people bring to their internships in my office and those of my colleagues helps keep our democracy vibrant. The insights, skills, and knowledge of the governmental process they gain from their experiences will last a lifetime and prove invaluable to them as they go about making their mark in this world.

I am grateful that such thoughtful committed young men and women can be found working in my office, those of my colleagues, and in every community in America. Their good works will keep America great and good.

ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants, and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and to place service above self for the sake of our great nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Colonel Dan Prather served in the United States Army from 1963 to 1993. After participating in ROTC at West Texas State University, Mr. Prather was commissioned in the U.S. Army, beginning his military career at Fort Hood. As a company commander and aide de camp to Major General George Ruhlen, he earned his Ranger tab to improve on his infantry skills. During his two tours of Vietnam, he earned the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Combat Valor, and Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster, along with numerous other medals.

As seen from his decorations, Mr. Prather demonstrated countless moments of valor, loyalty, and leadership. One exemplary moment was his decision to change daytime patrols of the Viet Cong to nighttime patrols. The "Rat Patrol," as he called it, was instantly successful, capturing weapons, mines, and grenades while neutralizing 34 enemy soldiers, all within the first month of operation. In fact, Mr. Prather's tactical strategy proved so effective that other U.S. Infantry adopted his nighttime model to high levels of success. Perhaps even more impressive than his tactical instincts is under his command, he lost not one soldier's life through both of his tours in Vietnam. That's remarkable leadership.

To quote a man who served in Prather's battalion at Fort Polk, who later became a General, "What a great soldier, leader, and commander Dan Prather was. In my view, he was the best of all . . . whenever I faced tough situations as a commander, I often thought of how he would have handled it."

After his military career, his dedication to service never waned. He served as a City Al-

derman for two terms in Madison, Mississippi, where he created local community improvement and infrastructure projects. When a horrific flood hit the town, he hopped right in his truck with his chain saw to help homeowners clear away rubble and start rebuilding. That's the active, selfless and relentless leadership for which he will be remembered.

Colonel Dan Prather, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service to our country and our community both past and present. It is my pleasure to award you the 2013 Congressional Veteran Commendation for the Third District of Texas.

CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOBBY AND LETA AYERS

HON. RALPH M. HALL

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Bobby and Leta Ayers who celebrated their 60th anniversary this year. Their commitment to each other and their family is an inspiration and a wonderful reminder of the importance of family, particularly during the holiday season.

Bobby and Leta were wed on July 3, 1953, at First Christian Church, Caddo Mills, by Dr. James S. Riley. Over the past six decades, Mr. and Mrs. Ayers have been blessed with one son, Dean, and his wife Gerry Ayers and one daughter, Diane, and her husband David Lindsey, as well as four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

The Ayers have lived their lives in Caddo Mills, Texas. Bobby worked for TXU Energy for 40 years and is now retired. Leta gave private piano lessons and was a church secretary for 10 years at their church, First Baptist, Caddo Mills.

Bobby and Leta Ayers are blessed to have had so many happy years together, and I wish them many more. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebration of the Ayer's 60th wedding anniversary.

HONORING LUISA DeLAURO AS SHE CELEBRATES HER 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 16, 2013

Ms. DeLAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is always an honor for me to have the opportunity to rise and recognize the accomplishments of those I so proudly represent. Today, however, is particularly special as I stand to pay tribute to my mother, Luisa DeLauro, who will celebrate her 100th birthday this December 24. She is—by any definition—an extraordinary woman,

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